

*Automatic fire sprinklers could reduce death rate per fire by at least 75 percent*

Commack, NY--Today, Rep. Steve Israel (D-Huntington) visited the Commack Fire Department to call on Congress to pass legislation to incentivize property owners to install automatic fire sprinklers in older buildings and improve fire safety. He was joined by the Fitzsimons Family of Commack who lost their daughter, Kerry Rose, 21, this past January in a house fire at the off-campus house she lived in at Marist College. Just last week the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) U.S. Fire Administration issued a special report on civilian fire fatalities and found that thirty-six percent of fire victims in residential buildings were trying to escape at the time of their deaths; another 35 percent were sleeping. Every second counts and by simply installing automatic fire sprinklers we can make a difference.

Rep. Israel said, "Making it easier for property owners to install automatic fire sprinklers is common-sense and a policy we can all agree on. We have lost too many to house fires that could have been prevented. I commend the Fitzsimons family for bringing attention to an issue that will save lives."

Maryanne Fitzsimons, mother of Kerry Rose, echoed the Congressman's sentiments. Mrs. Fitzsimons said, "If I could prevent another tragedy, it would be a move in the right direction. We know that fire sprinklers save lives. I implore congress to get this passed, and I thank Rep. Israel for his support."

Commissioner Pat Fazio of the Commack Fire Department also spoke about the importance of fire sprinklers to minimizing a fire's impact.

Commissioner Fazio said, "Fire sprinklers can dramatically reduce the impact of a fire on both residents and first responders. Losing Kerry Rose, a member of our community, to a fire only makes the need for fire safety education and the installation of automatic fire sprinklers more acute. Let's get this legislation passed so we can better protect our families and our first responders."

The Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act puts the installation of fire sprinklers in older residential or

commercial buildings in the same category as other capital improvements by either making them eligible for section 179 expensing or decreasing the current depreciation schedule for such improvements on high rise buildings from 39 to 15 years. This means that small and medium sized businesses will be able to fully expense the cost of a sprinkler retrofit for structures as large as 50,000 square feet. While newer residential and commercial buildings are required to be outfitted with automatic fire sprinklers, thousands of older buildings were not required to meet such standards.

Fire Sprinklers have been proven to dramatically reduce the cost and impact of fires on neighborhoods and local communities. The National Fire Protection Association concluded in a study that the death rate per fire could be reduced by at least 75 percent, and property damages reduced by up to 68 percent. This significant reduction is due to the fact that sprinklers are able to contain a fire at the location of origin almost 90 percent of the time.

The Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act currently has 32 cosponsors.